

FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125



Recorded by Nancy S. Seasholes

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date (month / year) March 1998

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

0056000195

Boston N.

679

Town Lexington

Place (neighborhood or village)

Address 14 Glen Rd. South

Historic Name Muzzey House; the Homestead

Uses: Present Residential

Original Residential

Date of Construction 1835

Source Muzzey family memoir

Style/Form Greek Revival

Architect/Builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation Fieldstone

Wall/Trim Wood Clapboard

Roof Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

Major Alterations (with dates)

Porch on east elevation (19th century)

Dormers added (after 1913)

Addition and porch on north elevation (dates unknown)

Condition Excellent

Moved ☐ no ☒ yes Date 1913

Acreage 2.4 A.

Setting On a heavily-wooded lot on the side of a steep hill below a neighborhood of high-style late 19th-century houses and above one of modest late 19th-century houses; on a steep, one-lane, barely paved street

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION ☐ see continuation sheet

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

14 Glen Rd. South is one of the most intact high-style Greek Revival houses in Lexington. The house is rectangular, 2½ stories, five-by-four bays, and side-gabled with two tall chimneys near the edge of the front roof and a similar tall chimney at the rear, the elevation facing Glen Rd. South. It is set on a fieldstone foundation, clad with wood clapboards, and roofed with asphalt shingles. On the north elevation is a two-story shed-roofed addition that has a one-story shed-roofed porch with a flattened arch entrance. The identical entries on the front and rear have transom lights and full-length sidelights; the long first-story windows on the south elevation are 6/9 double hung sash, other windows are 6/6. Greek Revival finishes include a full entablature around the entire house, creating a pedimented attic; paneled cornerboards with acanthus leaves at top and bottom; molded window heads with a cornerblock detail, and a hood over the rear (west) entry that has a full entablature supported by columns with Ionic capitals. The full-width porch on the front (east) facade has Italianate finishes: square, chamfered, pilastered posts, flattened arches, and a cut-out frieze with drops. To the right of the center entrance on this facade is a secondary entrance with a stained glass light. There are low shed-roofed dormers on the front and rear slopes of the roof. The interior has several high-style finishes including acanthus leaf molding on the opening between the front and back parlors.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE ☒ see continuation sheet

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

This house was originally on Massachusetts Ave. on the site of the present Edison Station—now the northwest corner of Massachusetts Ave. and Grant St. There had been an earlier house on the site, probably built in the second quarter of the 18th century by Amos Muzzey (1700–1752), which was later occupied by his son Amos (1741–1822) and grandson Amos (1766–1829). After the death of the last Amos, his son, Benjamin Muzzey (1795–1848), who had been a merchant in Boston, returned to Lexington in 1830. For several years he and his family occupied the Amos Muzzey House only in the summer, returning to Boston in the winter, but in 1834 he moved the Amos Muzzey house to some land he owned on Waltham St., now the northeast corner of Vine Brook Rd. where the house now at 52 Waltham St. (MHC #20) is located (see 40 Forest St. [MHC #681] form), and built this house on the Massachusetts Ave. site. A memoir written by one of Benjamin Muzzey's granddaughters says that this house was built in 1835, probably true since she describes a dinner party held there on April 19, 1835, although Lexington assessors' records do not list a "new house" for Benjamin Muzzey until 1837, suggesting it was not finished until 1836. Benjamin Muzzey is described in the antiquarian history of Lexington as a "popular man" in town; he was on the school committee in 1831–34, 1836, 1838, and 1840; a selectman in 1840, 1843, and 1848; a state representative in 1843; and a justice of the peace in 1846. He was also instrumental in bringing the railroad to Lexington, giving the land for the right of way through his farm in order to persuade other farmers that the railroad was not dangerous. He died suddenly at the Exchange Coffee House in Boston in 1848.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES ☒ see continuation sheet

"Amos Muzzey House Gets Historic Tablet from DAR." *Lexington Minute-man*, 26 April 1951.

Clippings book. "Muzzey House." Scrapbook of late 1940s–early 50s clippings from *Lexington Minute-man*. In possession of Nancy S. Seasholes, Lexington, MA.

Hudson, Charles. *History of the Town of Lexington*. Revised and continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913. 2: 480, 482–84, 486.

Lexington Historical Society. *Lexington. A Hand-book of Its Points of Interest, Historical and Picturesque*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Historical Society, 1891. 40.

☒ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (continued)

When Benjamin Muzzey died his debts amounted to almost \$19,000; his widow lost the house through a mortgage foreclosure in 1859 but it was bought back almost immediately by her son David W. Muzzey (1833–1913). In the 1880s the latter began to develop the Muzzey land in the Sherman/Grant/Sheridan streets and Oakland St. areas, selling it off as houselots. In the late 19th century this house, which the Muzzeyes called the Homestead, had gardens and fruit trees on the south side and a stable at the rear. A large red cattle barn was further back at the base of the hill. Late 19th-century photographs show the house with no dormers, and an 1898 plan and the family memoir indicate that there were several ells on the north end.

In 1913, soon after David W. Muzzey's death, the Edison Corporation asked to buy the houselot as a site for a new substation. After much deliberation, the family decided to sell the land and move the house to some Muzzey land up the hill on a street, now Glen Rd. South, that David Muzzey had opened in 1912. The moving was directed by Charles DeVeau, a building contractor who lived nearby on Sherman St. (see 2 Sherman St. [MHC #676] form), and the actual work done by the Ellis Company of Boston. The site on the hill was prepared so that the house would be aligned exactly as it had been on Massachusetts Ave., which is why the rear of the house now faces Glen Rd. South. To ready the house for moving, the rear ells were cut off, the barn torn down, and the house cut in half crosswise just north of the entries. Each half was moved on large wooden rollers, which photographs indicate rolled on railroad tracks, pulled by a cable wound around a windlass and drawn by two horses. Moving the first half began in the middle of April; it took three weeks to get it across the railroad tracks, down Grant St., up Glen Rd. South, and onto the new foundation. The second half was then moved, the two halves joined, and after the interior was replastered, painted, and papered, the house was ready for occupancy by late August. The house continued to be occupied by the children of David W. Muzzey, one of whom, David Saville Muzzey (b. 1870), became a noted historian and the author of a well-known text book on U.S. history, until 1979 when Clifford Muzzey (1886–1984) sold the house to its present owners.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES (continued)

Lexington Valuation Lists. 1830–1838.

Middlesex Registry of Deeds. Deeds, Plans. Cambridge, MA. 598: 463; 827: 413; Pl. Bk. 65, Pl. 12; Pl. Bk. 188, Pl. 31.

Muzzey, Helen. Story of the Homestead. In possession of Kathy Mockett and John Oberteuffer, Lexington, MA.

Worthen, Edwin B. Notes on buildings burned, torn down, and moved. "Houses" file, Worthen Collection. Cary Library, Lexington, Mass. #34

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Roll #8, Negative #35